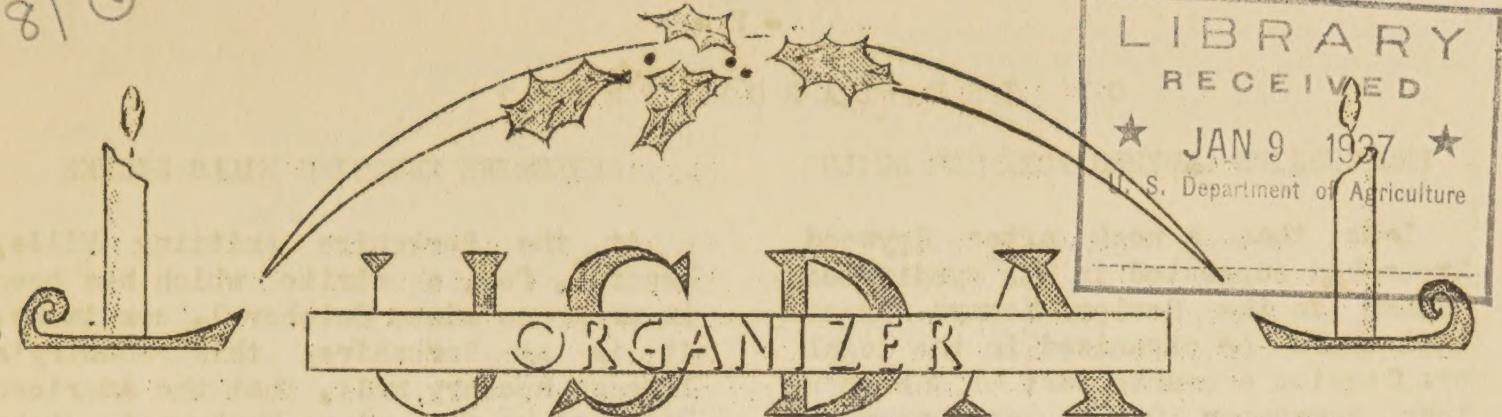


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American Federation
of
Government Employees

Lodge 31 A.F.G.E.

Affiliated with
American Federation
of Labor

Vol. 1, No. 7

December, 1936

JOIN THE A.F.G.E.

Have you seriously considered the pros and cons of joining a union of government employees? Do you honestly believe that the benefits that you have received in the way of restored pay, leave, etc., are free gifts from a benevolent, and paternal Congress? Far from it - the history of improvement in employment conditions is one of organization, of the marshalling of forces and sentiment in order to impress upon our law-makers the economic need and the political expediency of measures in the employees' interest.

The points of contact between employees and Congress are many, most important among which may be mentioned the union legislative representatives and the press. Both of these presuppose a national organization with the means and influence to effect the contact. And these latter are measured directly in membership.

Accordingly, an employee who fails to add his support to the organization financially and personally, is jeopardizing the welfare of himself as well as of his unionized co-workers. He is receiving benefits won by the efforts of others.

A union to be effective must adequately express the collective opinion of its members, in order that an intelligent legislative program may be pursued. Through numbers that program shall achieve influence.

JOIN the A.F.G.E. for a bigger, better and more democratic organization! JOIN the A.F.G.E. and halt the economy drive! JOIN the A.F.G.E. and become an active part in the American Labor Movement!



ON THE LABOR FRONT

PROGRESSIVE LAWYERS FORM NEW GUILD

Less than a week after Heywood Broun had suggested in his syndicated column in the Scripps-Howard press that there be organized in the legal profession a counterpart of the American Newspaper Guild, announcement was made of the formation of the National Lawyers Guild, under the presidency of Frank P. Walsh.

The significance of the new organization in the general labor scene lies in a single terse paragraph in its statement of objectives: "to advance the professional work and economic well-being of the members of the bar."

Established under the leadership of men who have evidenced a character of progressiveness and foresightedness, the Guild may reasonably be expected to effect the development of the law in channels favorable to labor.

THE C.I.O. CAMPAIGN GOES FORWARD

The C.I.O. organizing campaign, having thus far met with remarkable success, is being, if anything, intensified.

The last few weeks have seen victories in a number of strikes carried on by unions which have committed themselves to the support of the Committee, all involving far-reaching concessions to labor, and the commencement of negotiations at C.I.O. headquarters for the consolidation of three unions in the boot and shoe industry. On December 15 the United Electrical and Radio Workers of America, an affiliated organization, was chosen over the company-union as the bargaining agency for the Schenectady plants of the General Electric Company, in an election conducted by the National Labor Relations Board.

BERKSHIRE KNITTING MILLS STRIKE

At the Berkshire Knitting Mills, Reading, Pa., a strike which has been in progress since October 1, continues. It is at Berkshire, this country's largest hosiery mill, that the American Federation of Hosiery Workers is risking what virtually may be its existence as an effectual labor organization in an endeavor to stem the influx of sweatshop conditions into the manufacture of hosiery. It is at Berkshire that police repression, such as has not been known in Pennsylvania since the dismemberment of the infamous Coal and Iron Police, has risen. It is at Berkshire that strikers, most of whom are in their teens or early twenties, courageously lay on a cold, wintry day on the road before the gates of the mills, forming a human mat, to prevent ingress.

There has been organized a movement to boycott hosiery manufactured in Berkshire's Reading Mills. The boycott, reports indicate, is receiving the support of all elements sympathetic to labor's plight.

MIDLAND STEEL STRIKE GAINS VICTORY

At Detroit an eight-day sit-down strike at the Midland Steel Products Company resulted in a settlement which embodied union recognition, higher wages, and abolition of piece-work.

More important, in the larger aspects, than victory, was the expression of solidarity which came from workers in the Chrysler, Dodge and Plymouth plants. There, men refused to work with frames brought in from other mills when the strike at Midland forced cancellation of orders.

This is but one more expression of the growing realization of the "oneness" of labor in an integrated society.

THE SCIENTIST AND GOVERNMENT UNIONS

"With the exception of the Public Health Service, parts of the Agriculture Department, and possibly one or two other units, Government Science is now at the very low point it hit in the economy spree of 1933."

This conclusion based upon the report of a special commission headed by Karl T. Compton to investigate Government Science, appeared November 19, in the "9 to 4:30" column of the Washington Daily News. Drawing his material from this report, the columnist pointed out that salaries for scientists had been condemned as being far below a logical standard, and that appropriations had been cut to the point where progress was stifled.

It may be said that retrenchment in one form or another continues to hamper the efforts of scientists. Vacancies are permitted to lapse, and appropriations are returned as a matter of course to the Treasury. Raises and promotions, if not inadequate, are extremely difficult to obtain. In this connection, emphasis should be placed upon the fact that the normal progress of the scientific worker in his work did not cease with the Economy Act, and that, therefore, raises in part should be commensurate with this uncompensated progress.

Although a large number of scientists are acutely aware of the shortcomings under which they labor, they ignore what is possibly the most fruitful approach to a solution of their economic difficulties, that is, through organization, and through collaboration with organized labor. Encouraging, however, is the rapid growth of organizations of professional men, who recognize that the special economic problems and tasks of professional men as a group are but particular aspects of the more general problems and tasks confronting organized labor.

The report of the committee on Government Science should arouse into effective action government scientists.

(Concluded at the bottom of
the next column)

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Simon Rottenberg

LODGE 31 ON JOINT COMMITTEE

The joint committee representing Agriculture Lodge 31, R.A. Lodge 206, and WPA Lodge 139, has arranged for a mass meeting to be held in the early part of January to gain support for the tri-point program which these three lodges are sponsoring:

1. A WPA project to be set up to absorb dismissed government employees from non-civil service agencies.
2. Use of the WPA replacement register to be made mandatory.
3. Non-competitive civil service examinations to be given present non-civil service employees and qualifying examinations to be given to non-civil service employees who have been dismissed on account of curtailed programs, to make them eligible for civil service appointment.

Lodge 31's interest in these objectives is explained by the fact that it numbers among its members employees of the AAA who may be affected during the coming economy drive.

The promotion of their welfare as scientists and as individuals depends on it. The approach through organized effort, and through collaboration with organized labor should in no way conflict with the approach through individual action. Worthy scientists may make worthy union members, and conversely, worthy union members may make worthy scientists.

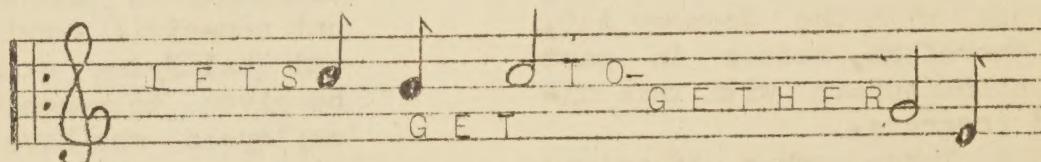
WHAT THE OTHER LODGES ARE DOING

RESETTLEMENT

R. A. Lodge 206 at its last meeting passed a resolution asking that qualifying examinations be given dismissed employees of non-civil service agencies to make them eligible for civil service appointments. They believe that after an employee has passed many months in government service and has been performing his duties efficiently, this service record should count for something.

Another resolution passed at this meeting called for the creation of W.P.A. projects at classified wages to absorb dismissed government workers.

Other important resolutions passed at the meeting called for the bringing into Civil Service of RA employees, and for the amendment of the Social Security Act to provide unemployment insurance for government workers.



Lodge 31 invites and encourages its membership to help in building the organization. There are many things to be accomplished - all of them vital - most of them interesting. Only through widespread interest and participation can Lodge 31 become a representative union.

Among the committees that provide interesting work are EDUCATION, ENTERTAINMENT, BULLETIN and MEMBERSHIP. Certainly among our members there are many new ideas and suggestions. The chairmen of the above mentioned committees, as well as all committee chairmen, welcome you who are not already committee members, to take part in the work that interests you most.

Let's get behind our union and build it into one that will make all unions in the A.F.G.E. sit up and take notice - - - IT CAN BE DONE! Let's make Lodge 31 grow and strengthen on a real foundation - we do not want an organization run by a few. That's why we encourage each member to take part. Sign up with one of the committees today - and watch Lodge 31 grow!

If you are interested, drop a note to President John Schricker in Room 3630 (South Bldg.), and he will arrange to have someone contact you.

W. P. A.

W.P.A. Lodge 139 is fighting the wholesale cuts in the administrative force which have been put into effect. They argue that circumstances have not yet demonstrated that the need for projects for the unemployed, and a proper supervisory force, is at an end.

Several lodges are combining in a drive toward making the hiring of non-civil service employees mandatory from the replacement register which was set up under the W.P.A. last year. This reemployment register is serving a good purpose but is not being used on all occasions. In a great many cases agencies have recruited people new to government service, rather than reemployed those dismissed from other departments in the government where curtailment of personnel was effected.

FRENCH GOVERNMENT UNIONS

French government unions occupy an important place in the French labor movement. The National Federation of Functionaries Unions, which is only one of several unions of government employees, is today the largest union in France, while another government trade union, that of the teachers, has almost as many members as the miners' and railway workers' unions.

French government employees have had a long struggle to gain the right to organize. The first attempts in 1906 of French functionaries to join the C.G.T. (Confederation Generale du Travail) were met with wholesale persecution. The only section which succeeded in getting organized was that of the elementary teachers.

In 1909 an "illegal strike" of the postal workers broke out and was ruthlessly suppressed by Clemenceau. Although it was unsuccessful, it was an important event in the development of the labor movement because for the first time in French labor history the strength of the government employees was demonstrated.

The very poor economic conditions

prevailing at the close of the World War brought about a sweeping movement of organization among government functionaries which the government was powerless to stop. By May 1920 the National Federation of Functionaries became affiliated with the CGT. Although the government continued to treat these unions as "illegal" for some time, a gradual change took place in legislation, and by 1924 government unions were put on the same basis as other unions. The right to organize was now granted and recognized.

Today the position of the French government unions is in direct proportion to their militant struggles in the past and their solidarity with the working class movement as a whole. The Federation of Functionaries had about 200,000 members out of 1,000,000 of the C.G.T. in March 1936. Bearing in mind that the overwhelming majority of French labor is organized along industrial and not craft lines, the French government unions seem destined to a future of great activity.

(Summarized from a paper presented at the Dec. 3 meeting of Lodge 31)

* * * * *

POST MORTEMS ON THE HAYLOFT DANCE

The most "prominent" figure present was Santa Claus, in the person of Sam Lubell, of the Washington Post.

If we couldn't see him we would have sworn it was Jack Benny in the role of master of ceremonies--but we did see him and it was none other than our President, John Schricker!

The Indians at the party were from the Resettlement Administration "tribe" and put on for us the skit which had made such a hit at the last meeting of that department, "The Home of the Brave." Here is an up and coming dramatic unit worthy of emulation.

Those who enjoyed the Hayloft party (Only about 99.99% of those present) are looking forward to the next dance which the Lodge is giving on Jan. 23.

* * *

BOWLING PARTY JANUARY 16

On Saturday, January 16, 1937 at 3:00 P.M., Lodge 31 is sponsoring a Bowling Party. The bowling will take place at the Lucky Strike Alley and prizes will be awarded both to the gentleman and to the lady getting the highest scores. For those of you who are not "cracker-jack" bowlers, there is still a chance to win a prize. For those of you who do not win a prize there is a chance for a whole lot of fun! So come out and join us for a Saturday afternoon you're sure to enjoy. The cost is 15¢ for each game and you can bowl as long as you like.

JOIN LODGE 31 TODAY

BOOK
REVIEWS

AMERICAN LABOR STRUGGLES

By Samuel Yellen

Published by Harcourt, Brace & Company \$3.50

This is a simple, journalistic narrative of ten major struggles important in the history of American labor which have taken place in the basic industries--transportation, steel, coal and textiles. Without fanfare or attempts at sensationalism, the author gives a graphic account of the factors leading up to each crisis, the developments of the struggle and the final effects. The account is rounded out, in each case, by an analysis of the causes underlying each development and the weakness or strength of the various strategems employed. Further, we are given the reaction of the public and press in each instance and the part played by the government.

In the first struggle described, the great railroad strike of 1877, we see the feebleness of the labor movement at that time and the pitifully desperate attempts of the railroad workers to oppose their employers without organization, without leaders and without knowledge or experience of the weapons of labor. Startling are some of the comments of the press during this labor crisis, such as the NATION'S dictum that "Society does not owe any particular rate of wages to anybody." The typical opinion of the day was expressed by Rev. Henry Ward Beecher when he said, "Persons have the right to work when or where they please, as long as they please, and for what they please."

This book shows wherein the courts have aided the forces of capital by injunctions, issuance of warrants against strike leaders, bail charges which deplete the unions' treasuries, and conviction of men active in the labor movement for their beliefs rather than for their actions.

Eight labor leaders were arrested at Haymarket when a bomb was mysteriously thrown during a demonstration of strikers. Evidence against these men was entirely lacking. At the trial State's Attorney Grimmell concluded his speech to the jury as follows: "Law is upon trial. Anarchy is upon trial. These men have been selected, picked out by the grand jury and indicted because they were leaders. They are no more guilty than the thousands who follow them. Gentlemen of the jury, convict these men, make examples of them, hang them, and you save our institutions, our society."

In the chapter on the Pullman strike, the author depicts a "model" company town. While show places were maintained for visitors, in reality the workers lived in overcrowded tenement blocks, 300 to 500 persons in each, with only one closet and one water faucet for each group of five families, no bathtubs, and one barren space which served as the common yard for all the tenements surrounding it. The company served as employer and landlord--collected the rent, supplied water and gas, disposed of the sewage, and accepted the savings of the workers in its bank. Many times, after having deducted for rent, food supplies, etc., the company handed the worker a salary envelope containing no salary but a bill showing money due the company. Pullman made

(Continued on Page 7)

additional profits by reselling to the workers the water and gas which it purchased from the City of Chicago; in fact, no service which the company furnished the workers was without its profit. Even the sewage was used to fertilize the 140-acre farm of Pullman.

In the steel strike of 1919 the "red" scare was generated and the idea circulated that the men in the plants were perfectly satisfied with their conditions but that "Communists" and "aliens" had stirred them up against their employers. During this strike the "whispering campaign" was employed most effectively. It was the function of some of the detectives or under-cover men to whisper among the strikers that the strike was failing, and to spread rumors about union leaders. The Sherman Service, Inc., a well known detective agency, instructed its operatives in South Chicago as follows: "We have talked to you and instructed you. We want you to stir up as much bad feelings as you possibly can between the Serbians and Italians. Spread data among the Serbians that the Italians are going back to work. Call up every question you can in reference to racial hatred between these two nationalities. Urge the Serbians to go back to work or the Italians will get their jobs."

Of all the major strikes described in the book, few of them ended in complete victory for the strikers, although they won concessions here and there. The reader, however, is brought to the conclusion that the drawing together of workers in each strike has been productive of a growing solidarity in the ranks of labor. Each strike which has disclosed some of the deplorable conditions in industry has served to educate the public to the necessity for labor unions.

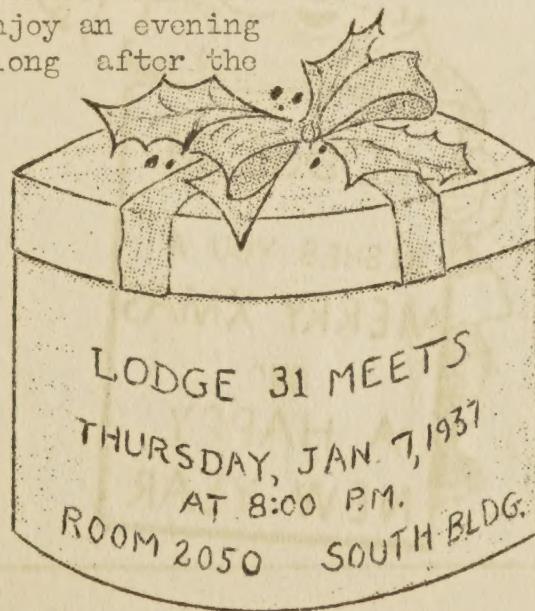
F - L - A - S - H

Lodge 31 wishes to announce a dance to be held on Saturday, January 23, 1937 in the Dragon Room of the Wardman Park Hotel.

Dancing to Maxim Lowe's Shoreham Music and knocking elbows with fellow employees should certainly afford a worth while evening! The price of admission is 75¢ plus 8¢ tax--the hours, 10 to 1. The dance is open to all - so bring your friends and enjoy an evening that will be remembered long after the dance is over!

For tickets, see your Dues Collector or Della Cogan in Room 2754, South Bldg.

Beginning in January, when Congress is in session, Lodge 31 will meet on the first and third Thursdays of each month. The meetings will be held in Room 2050, South Bldg. at 8:00 P.M.



HOW ARE WE DOING?

The ORGANIZER is the official organ of Lodge 31 and should therefore be used by all employees in the Department of Agriculture. Criticisms and suggestions pertaining to the ORGANIZER and to union activities should be sent in to Della Cogan, Room 2754, South Bldg.

STRIKE AT LANSBURGH'S

Many Christmas shoppers were rather surprised to note pickets in front of Lansburgh's, indicating that a strike is in progress at this store. A member of the Retail Clerks' Union will be at the next meeting of Lodge 31 to give us the details of this strike. Meanwhile, the Retail Clerks' Union asks that friends of Labor do not patronize Lansburgh's while the strike is on.

JOIN LODGE 31 TODAY

Name Date

Home Address

Bureau Bldg.

Room No. Office Phone No.

Initiation Fee \$1.00

Fill out this blank and send in to any one of
the members listed below.

A. Mack, C&S	Rm. 0130	R. Samson, BAE	Rm. 3055
A. Leviton, DI	Rm. 0624	J. A. Schricker, C&S	Rm. 3630
C. Beard, Forest Ser.	Rm. 1104	S. R. Levine, BAE	Rm. 3859
C. Hirschfield, EPQ	Rm. 1429	H. Musnick, AAA	Rm. 3960
E. Gallahue, AAA	Rm. 1764	Nellie Shaffer, BEPQ	Rm. 4867
B. R. Bailey, Cont. S.	Rm. 1870	Anne Gross, Sol.	Rm. 6761
S. Rottenberg, AAA	Rm. 2091	B. Lash, AI	Rm. 49E Adm. Bldg.
M. Leatherman, C&S	Rm. 2148	E. Terry, PI	Rm. 309W Adm. Bldg.
S. H. Dannhardt, C.E.	Rm. 2416	K. Bashook, SCS	207 St. Oil Bldg.
L. Matosoff, BAE	Rm. 2609	S. Katz, SCS	207 St. Oil Bldg.
R. S. Sowell, AAA	Rm. 2754	W. Scholl, C&S American University	
C. C. Warren, AAA	Rm. 2760		
L. Cummings, BAE	Rm. 2833		
J. A. Maxwell	F.S.C.C.		
F. Donohue, AAA	13th & E Sts.	H. P. Newton, C&S Arlington Farms	

